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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 795 (1992)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 795 (1992) of 11 December 1992, the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to establish a presence of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as recommended by him in his report of 9 December 1992 (S/24923). The Council requested in the same resolution that the Secretary-General deploy immediately the military, civil affairs and administrative personnel he had recommended in his report, as well as police monitors, upon receiving the consent of the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and to keep the Council regularly informed of the implementation of the resolution. In its resolution 842 (1993) the Council welcomed the offer of a Member State to contribute additional personnel to the UNPROFOR presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and authorized their deployment. The present report is submitted to inform the Council of UNPROFOR's deployment and activities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia prior to this expansion, in keeping with operative paragraph 5 of resolution 795 (1992).

2. Paragraphs 3 and 4 of my report of 9 December set out the recommendations of the exploratory mission, further elaborated in the annex to the report, and approved by the Security Council. These recommendations were:

(a) "that a small UNPROFOR presence be established on the Macedonian side of the republic's borders with Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) with an essentially preventive mandate of monitoring and reporting any developments in the border areas which could undermine confidence and stability in Macedonia or threaten its territory", and

(b) "that a small group of United Nations civilian police should be deployed in the border areas to monitor the Macedonian border police."

As indicated, in paragraph 4, "the rationale for this latter deployment is that incidents arising from illegal attempts to cross the border have recently led to increased tension on the Macedonian side. The mission believed that the presence of a small United Nations civilian police detachment would have a calming effect."

II. DEPLOYMENT

3. In mid-December 1992, a small team of Civil Affairs officers, a Senior Military Observer and a Senior Administrative Officer was sent to Skopje to discuss with the Government practical arrangements for the deployment of the UNPROFOR Command in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

4. Following the consent given by the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 19 December to the deployment of UNCIVPOL personnel, the first UNCIVPOL monitors arrived on 27 December 1992. Subsequently, UNCIVPOL deployed along the northern and western borders. As at 17 May 1993, there were 24 UNCIVPOL monitors, 10 based in Ohrid, monitoring the western border, and a further 14 located in Skopje, with responsibility for monitoring the northern border.

5. On 28 December, a reconnaissance team from the second Canadian battalion arrived in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to make the necessary arrangements for the interim deployment of a Canadian company, pending the arrival of a joint battalion from Finland, Norway and Sweden. The Canadian company arrived on 7 January 1993 and remained until 18 February 1993.

6. Brigadier-General Finn Saermark-Thomsen of Denmark, who was designated Commander of the Macedonian Command of UNPROFOR, arrived in Skopje on 25 January 1993. On 18 February 1993, the Nordic battalion took over the operation from the Canadian company.

7. The Nordic battalion was deployed on the western border from Debvar northward and on the northern border up to the border with Bulgaria. The Nordic battalion is a 434-man force composed of three rifle companies. Its headquarters has been established in Kjojlia, approximately 18 km. east of Skopje. The headquarters in Kjojlia also includes the logistics company. The Finnish company is deployed in the north-western part of the area of operations with its headquarters in Tetovo. The Norwegian company is deployed in the centre of the area of operations with its headquarters in George Petrov in the outskirts of Skopje. The Swedish company is deployed in the north-eastern part of the area of operations with its headquarters in Kumanovo. As at May 1993, there were 18 permanently manned observation posts, 4 along the border with Albania and 14 along the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

8. The United States force of some 300 soldiers arrived in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the first two weeks of July, and is in the process of deploying.

9. There are 19 United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs) in the area of operations. The western border area south of Debar is covered solely by UNMOs, who constitute the main United Nations presence there. They have a small headquarters in Ohrid. At present, 11 UNMOs are responsible for patrolling the area south of Debar. The remaining military observers are deployed on the northern border area or serve at the headquarters in Skopje.

10. The Civil Affairs and the Civilian Administration staff, which consists of four and five professionals, respectively, are located at the headquarters in Skopje.

III. ACTIVITIES

11. Since early January 1993, the northern border and the western border north of Debar have been constantly monitored from observation posts and by regular patrols, first by the Canadian company and then by the Nordic battalion, with a view to reporting any activities that might increase tension or threaten peace and stability. So far their observations, which are made exclusively from inside the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, have not shown any activity which might be regarded as posing an external threat to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

12. UNPROFOR military personnel have had a number of encounters with soldiers of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) who claimed that UNPROFOR had intruded into territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). These incidents have so far been resolved satisfactorily. The problem arises from the fact that the border between the two former republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, previously only an internal border, has not been definitively delineated. The two Governments have not yet been able to establish a joint border commission to resolve this matter conclusively. This constitutes a potential source of conflict but both sides have so far refrained from resorting to threats or moves against one another or against UNPROFOR. UNPROFOR continues to lend its good offices in the role of "go-between" as and when required.

13. The UNMOs conduct regular patrols in their area of operations to monitor the situation. They have also carried out a programme of visits to border villages aimed at gaining the confidence of their inhabitants and assisting in defusing possible inter-ethnic tensions.

14. While carrying out their border visiting programme, the UNMOs have been approached by representatives of the ethnic Albanian population who have lodged various complaints about alleged discriminatory practices by the Macedonian authorities. In those cases where the complaints are relevant to UNPROFOR's mandate, they are being brought to the attention of the appropriate national authorities, or, alternatively, to the attention of competent international bodies, such as the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia's Working Group on Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities (Sub-group on Macedonia) or the Commission on Human Rights.

15. UNCIVPOL conducts regular patrols to specific crossings and the border areas in general on a daily basis to monitor the work of the local border police, in particular with regard to the two shooting incidents on the border with Albania which occurred on 22 February and 19 April, respectively. These incidents reportedly occurred in connection with illegal border crossings. The first resulted in the death of an Albanian national, who was shot by a Macedonian border official. The Albanian national is believed by Macedonian police to have been directly involved in arms smuggling into Macedonia. UNCIVPOL is monitoring these cases closely.

16. UNCIVPOL has received through the Mayor of Debar a number of complaints by Albanians concerning the local border police. In those cases where there appeared prima facie to be a basis for the complaint, UNCIVPOL has taken up the matter with the relevant police authorities.

17. Since the commencement of their activities, UNCIVPOL has enjoyed a good working relationship with the local border police and other border personnel. The cooperation extended by the local authorities has also been most satisfactory.

18. The UNPROFOR Civil Affairs Office has established and maintained regular contacts with the relevant government authorities, members of parliament and representatives of political parties and has ensured coordination with the Mission of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the humanitarian organizations. With the CSCE mission, appropriate mechanisms of cooperation have been established as called for in Security Council resolution 795 (1992). This has been done in accordance with the Principles of Coordination between UNPROFOR and the CSCE mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia which were formally agreed to on 15 April 1993. The level of cooperation which has been achieved is considered by both sides to be highly effective and useful.

19. The Civil Affairs Office established, at the outset, an information programme to explain the role of UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Its focus has been to ensure that the public is given a variety of opportunities to understand the reason for UNPROFOR's presence and the nature of the deployment. Initially, the reason for the decision to deploy was not fully understood by the general public. An open information policy has been formulated, involving close relations with local radio, television and newspaper editors. At present, a print programme is being finalized to provide, in Macedonian and Albanian, clear explanations of UNPROFOR's presence and the role of the different components in a United Nations peace-keeping operation.

20. UNPROFOR's deployment in the area of operations and its subsequent activities in the performance of its mandate have been greatly facilitated by the supportive attitude and cooperation of the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as of authorities at various levels.

IV. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE UNPROFOR'S DEPLOYMENT

21. At the time of UNPROFOR's deployment, the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was gravely concerned about an external security threat. The UNPROFOR presence and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's admission to membership in the United Nations have contributed to alleviating those fears.

22. Some initial concerns over UNPROFOR's presence on the part of the Albanian sectors of the population have to a large extent been overcome through direct meetings with local officials and representatives of these groups and also through the information programme referred to above. The assistance provided by UNPROFOR to the victims of the tragic air crash which occurred on 5 March in Skopje did much to foster a positive perception of UNPROFOR by the population at large.

V. OBSERVATIONS

23. UNPROFOR has so far been successful in its preventive mandate in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is, of course, too early to draw definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of this deployment in the highly volatile situation that prevails in the region.

24. In this connection, the strengthening of UNPROFOR under Security Council resolution 842 (1993) is a welcome development. As the Council has repeatedly recognized, the UNPROFOR presence in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia makes a valuable contribution to stability in the region, and serves as an additional source of support for the international community's efforts to promote a peaceful resolution of the overall situation in the former Yugoslavia. The tangible support offered to these objectives in the form of the United States deployment will further strengthen confidence and stability in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and underscore the message that the international community will not accept any further widening of the tragic conflict in the region.

25. In proposing the initial deployment of UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 9 December 1992 (S/24923), I expressed the belief that a small preventive United Nations deployment would help the countries concerned "to make safe passage through a potentially turbulent and hazardous period". This remains my hope at a time when the conflagration in other parts of the former Yugoslavia shows little sign of abating.

26. I shall continue to keep the situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia under close review and shall revert to the Council as appropriate in the months to come.